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IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth S. Grimes



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Elizabeth S. Grimes.

Born in Lee, N. H., May 31, 1825.

Died in Washington, D. C., June 22, 1890.

[Her father, Edward B. Nealley, 1784—1837, was of the third generation from William Nealley, who emigrated from the North of Ireland, and settled in Nottingham, N. H., about the year 1725.

Her mother, Sally True, 1789—1850, was of the seventh generation from Henry True, who came from England to Salem, Mass., about 1630 or 1635.

She was married to James W. Grimes Nov. 9, 1846, by Rev. W. Salter, at Burlington, Iowa Territory.]

At the funeral service held at her late home in Washington, D. C., June 23, 1890, after selections from Scripture and one of Whittier's hymns, read by the Rev. Dr. Shippen, Mr. Salter said :

The faith and hope of Holy Writ and of the poet of spiritual Christianity had impersonation in the life whose earthly term is closed. That the Eternal Goodness is with us now and here, that this world is an ante-chamber of heaven's portals, that our present life is not disjoined and dis severed from the life eternal, that it is for us to make the present radiant and aglow with divine inspiration, and do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven,—this was the pervasive sentiment of the spirit now departed.

We pay our tribute of respect and honor to one gifted with superior faculties, endowed with rare poise and balance of mind, enriched with a gracious and generous disposition, who discharged the various trusts that fell to her lot with wisdom

and judgment, and with entire devotion to duty, as the duty of every day required. To native strength of mind there was joined a transparent sincerity of purpose, before which nothing but what was fair and just and good had a moment's attention. In the purity of her own heart she found the vision of God and the open heaven. In her studies and thoughts she grasped the great questions that have agitated inquiring minds in this generation, and was an attentive observer of the progress of the century in science and art and philosophy and religion, and in the moral and social improvement of humanity, especially of the American people, and kept it upon her conscience, as it was given her to see the right, to help with sympathy and with firm but quiet endeavor in the liberation of truth, in the enlargement of freedom, and in the amelioration of human suffering and sorrow.

United in early life to one who afterward, as Governor of Iowa and as a Senator of the United States, gained honor and distinction in a critical period of the Nation's life, she helped with firm counsel and with the quick intuition of an unbiased mind and an unerring judgment in determining the struggle of that period upon the foundations of equity and liberty for all. The higher civilization of the Republic, the enthronement of justice, the education of the whole people, the unfolding of the noblest chapter of the book of time in the future history of the country, were her ideals of national prosperity and glory.

This strong and resolute mind, combined with the utmost delicacy and refinement, and a perfect command of every temper and feeling, gave serenity and composure to her character in all changes and circumstances, and she met the vicissitudes of life with never a murmur or complaint, but hoped always,

trusted always, believed always, assured that not more certainly day follows night in this world than that the eternal morning will reveal the Eternal Goodness without a cloud in the world to come.

For more than forty years, if I may be pardoned a personal reference, this vision of a pure and quiet life, hid with Christ in God, has passed before me, radiant with heaven's sunshine, filled with a thousand unremembered acts of kindness and of love, diffusing blessings on every side and among all classes from the humblest to the highest, giving comfort and cheer to the immigrant who felt as a stranger in a strange land, to the refugee from oppression, whether fleeing from slavery upon our own soil, or from some cruel despotism in the old world, and sharing with large sympathy in the trials and sorrows of a wide circle of relatives and friends.

In humble homes and in homes of affluence there are hearts that mourn with us, that they are no more to share in this world, save as a sacred memory, the immediate sympathy and kindly greeting of the hands now folded in the repose of death.

Let us then be animated, my friends, to follow this good example, and take heart for a pure, serene and unselfish life. In the holy faith, as expressed by one of her favorite poets, that "we fall to rise, that we are baffled to fight better, that we sleep to wake," she now rests in God, where that soaring mind, that kindly spirit, that pure heart, finds congenial home in the kingdom of the just.

The interment was at Burlington, Iowa, June 25th, where at the old home Mr. Salter said:

The bright and beautiful life that cheered and strengthened so many of us has now vanished, to appear in other realms, and gladden other mansions. Born in New Hampshire, she came with her widowed mother, her sisters, and her brother Joseph, to this city in 1844, following her brother Greenleaf, who had preceded the family in coming to the West a few years earlier.

At the age of twenty-one, her gentle spirit, her modest dignity, her thoughtful temper of mind, won the affection and confidence of one who appreciated sterling qualities of character, and they joined hearts and hands in making a new home in our city in the year 1846. For a few years they resided on Main street, where now stands the Union Hotel, then occupied by a beautiful garden and orchard, filled with choice flowers and fruits. In 1850 Mr. Grimes built this house, then far out upon the prairie, and here, to the close of his honored life, in 1872, was the happy home of faithful love and sweet content. The naked prairie was soon embowered in the shade of beautiful and glorious trees, and under the hand of taste and culture the quiet loveliness and repose which nature assumed in the environment of the home was a fit image of the grace and dignity that reigned within.

In 1854, Mr. Grimes was called to the Chief Magistracy of this Commonwealth, and in 1859 to a seat in the Senate of the Nation. Mrs. Grimes usually accompanied him to Washington, and was the good angel by his side in the anxious and troubled years of the Nation's transformation. When his health was stricken down, she went with him to Europe; but wherever their sojourn, this remained to them the dearest spot on earth, and whether under the dome of the Capitol, or in

London or Paris, or amid the lakes and the mountains of Switzerland, their hearts, untravelled, turned with fond anticipation and desire to these familiar scenes. Since the death of Mr. Grimes eighteen years ago, the sacred memories of the home have known no change. Though much of her time was passed elsewhere, to escape the rigor of our winter months, the old home never lost its superior charm, and to the last Mrs. Grimes looked upon a return to it with pleasure and with hope.

But no one more fully realized the uncertainty of every earthly expectation, or made every plan in life with a more humble and trustful spirit of acquiescence in the Will Supreme. To her all the ways of the Lord were mercy and truth, and in health and sickness, and in life and death she saw the providence of the Heavenly Father, who is good when He gives, and none the less when He denies.

Of the strength of character and purity of mind and magnanimity of nature and generosity of spirit that marked the life now closed, we all are witnesses; and no prayer can be more appropriate than that similar measures of the Holy Spirit, of the Spirit of wisdom, of power, of love and of a sound mind, may rest upon her relatives and friends, and upon us all, until we, too, shall "wrap the mantle of our couch about us, and lie down to pleasant dreams."

